



Volunteer & Director Cindi Strobel



Cindi, how long have you been involved in theatre?

I've loved acting ever since I played Laura Ingalls Wilder in reading class in 4th grade! I was involved in plays and musicals in both school and Community Theatre throughout high school and college. Theatre really was a home for me, and I majored in Theatre for two years before switching to Special Education.



So, you're a "Lifer". Can you tell us how you got started directing?

During my full-time mom/homeschooling mama years. I was very involved in Drama Ministry in our church, and I directed many Christmas and Easter musicals over the years. I also discovered my love for writing plays during that period.

7 years ago, I saw an ad on Facebook that Central Wisconsin Children's Theatre was looking for directors, so I excitedly applied and was accepted. I have had the chance to direct many of the annual winter shows and I just love it. The CWCT families are the best and my experiences there have been so positive.

Since then I've branched out to other local theatre groups. I've directed for [Mosinee Community Theatre](#) (in fact I'm directing Willy Wonka for them this summer - come see it), [Faith Christian Academy](#), [Out of the Woods Theatre](#), and I'm the Theatre Director at Wausau West HS.

And you mentioned teaching. What got you started with teaching?

Teaching is in my blood! My grandpa and my mom were both teachers and I taught for 5 years before attending grad school. I really enjoyed homeschooling my own kids, as well as teaching at a local homeschool co-op. I taught music and a lot of different drama classes. From Beginning Puppetry to Acting to Shakespeare!



Why is having a local children's theatre group so important to you?

Theatre has historically been the "safe place", where people are allowed to be as weird as they want and still be accepted. That is definitely the case at CWCT. We try to get everyone who auditions involved in the show; whether it's acting, dancing, set painting, costume help, or back stage. Whatever your skill level; there is a spot for you at CWCT. Children can learn to be a part of something bigger than themselves. Contrary to an "immediate gratification culture", kids learn the value and joy of collaborating as a team to create something special. Theatre teaches that.

"Doing" theatre can boost empathy and pro-social behavior in children. It can increase creativity, build self-esteem, enhance collaborative and time management skills, teach patience, promote empathy, and pave the way toward greater academic achievement. Children and teens who participate in the performing arts are more likely to be quick thinkers, master their anxiety, express emotions appropriately, and have higher self-esteem.



You've got me cheering! You're so passionate. One final question - what are you looking forward to for CWCT in the next year? There is no doubt that COVID has been hard on all of us, especially people in the performing arts. There is a tradition in theatre called "The Ghost Light"; each theater is supposed to leave a single light bulb burning, usually on the stage, whenever the theater is unoccupied. Historically, it was thought to keep ghosts away while the theater was empty – theatre people are notoriously superstitious! But it really means more than that. It means, "we will return". Theaters from CWCT to Broadway and the West End were shut down for the better part of two years, but all that while, the Ghost Lights (whether literally or figuratively) continued to burn, signifying that we will come back, the theater will be occupied again. We will once again bring the magic of theatre to a receptive audience.



So I guess I'm just plain excited about the future of CWCT! There are so many talented children and teens in the greater Wausau area and there are beautiful scripts and scores out there to be used. I can't wait to get started!!

Cindi, thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us. CWCT is so fortunate to have you as a volunteer - This summer at our [Theater Camps](#) and hopefully as a director very soon!

